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A CURRICULUM FOR A JEWISH SABBATH SCHOOL.

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THE religious education of the youth has grown to be of very serious and vital concern. One of the most imperious and imperative aspects of the Jewish problem, so called, is the religious education of the youth. Some religionists have sung loud and long the tune of justification by faith or justification by works, but the time is pressingly present for the Jew to strike the chord full and vibrant of the justification by education. The divine right of kings has had its day. The divine right of priests has gone the way of transient doctrines. It is the divine right of the teacher that must hold dogmatic sway over the coming generations of men and women.

The history of the Jew reveals two distinct facts: first, as the teacher of the dogma of divine right, and, second, the divine right of the teacher himself. The one comprehends the historic mission of the Jew; the other is the methodic transmission of Judaism. The former embodies the conception of God and his righteousness in relation to Israel and universal history; the other brings to view the long line of teachers, priests, prophets, rabbis, through whom this ideal was taught, promulgated, and given to humanity.

Concerning the supreme value of the former fact in education, permit me a further word of emphasis. Karl Budde has recently offered us a keen and comprehensive treatment of the historic origin and growth of Israel's religion. He regards Yahweh as originally a Kenite storm- or nature-deity whom Moses introduced to the children of Israel, and with whom they, having recognized him as their deliverer from Egypt, entered into covenant at Sinai. Yahweh, however, was not at this time a God demanding primarily morality, but simply a great and powerful deity of nature, worshiped with fear and dread. The knowledge of Yahweh's demand for *righteousness* came through *conscience* awakened by reflection upon the cause of his pleasure or displeasure.

The germ of this whole development took root at Sinai. Israel's religion became ethical because it was a religion of *choice* and not of *nature*, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time.¹

¹ BUDDE, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 38.

The rabbis later insisted on the voluntary acceptance of the law by Israel.

We have a very profound and significant fact that readily lends foundation to a process of religious education. The Jewish child passes and should pass through a similar series of religious stages. This God-idea from a nature-power to a people's accepted and covenanted Leader, and further on to the world's eternal Parent ruling individuals and nations in love, justice, and equity, should form a safe and sound backbone for a Jewish sabbath-school curriculum. The *entire revelation of God to man* in matter and in mind, in heart and in history, is the keynote of my plan and sounds the spiritual finale of the religious development of the individual.

COURSE I. PRIMARY OR TOPICAL.

Chief interest.—The chief interest of children from six to eight years lies in objects that appeal to the senses. Nature in all her beauty and motion appeals with a peculiar "intimacy and warmth" to them. They find her full of life and animate with a personality like their own. Nature should be presented as a great workshop, school, home, and republic in which God is at once the Maker, the Teacher, the Parent—the Ruler. All attempts at defining God or references as to his reality, locality, or spirituality should be studiously avoided. Nature-studies and Bible stories readily related to home and school life should form the essential materials for instruction. Since a child can grasp only one truth at a time, it may be well to present that one truth from as many points of view as possible. The best method in this special line is that of Miss Florence U. Palmer (Mrs. Aubrey E. King),² who first presents a truth, then illustrates it by a story, then by a picture, and lastly by a song.

The method of approach and of treatment should be topical rather than catechetical. The catechetical method smacks of the former days of education by rote. Its chief objection is that it robs the child of self-expression and compels it to be a question-machine. If the question-and-answer plan could be used as the Socratic method, merely to stimulate the child to thinking and beget suggestions, it would be wholly advisable. The preference for the topical method lies in the fact that it requires the pupil to give a connected statement and expression of the knowledge it has acquired concerning a *topic* assigned or told by the teacher. Thus the lessons should be presented under topics and in such a manner as to touch the daily life of the child. Insist on the truths, not on the details of the stories.

² *One Year of Sunday School Lessons for Young Children* (The Macmillan Co., 1902).

For much of the plan of Course I, I am greatly indebted to a stimulating article by Professor G. W. Pease.³ As outlined, the primary course can be covered in one or two years. Some teachers will prefer to develop Topic III—"Nature as a Home"—first, as taking precedence in time and desirability over Topic I—"Nature as a Workshop." While sentimentally strong, the preference lacks the historical justification. In the development of the race's religious life, as in the story of Israel's spiritual growth, no less than in that of each child's progress, the *respect* for the *power* that gives or withholds, for the power that manifests itself in storm and shine, in night and day, is a necessary antecedent to the advance of the element of love. The Sh'ma first announces the sublime dogma of the unity of God, and then calls upon us to love him with heart, soul, and might. Nearly every parent has won the love of his child by a display of his power. Love grows from respect, not *vice versa*. All the courses herein mapped out are for the teacher's guidance and not for the pupil's memorization.

[Class—Primary or Topical; Age, six to eight years; Branch—Nature-Studies; Biblical and non-Biblical Stories.]

THEME—GOD IN NATURE.

I. NATURE AS A WORKSHOP—GOD AS MAKER.

God said, "Let there be light."

THE POWER OF GOD demands REVERENCE IN MAN.

A. *The power of God.*

"How awe-inspiring is this place."

In forms of matter and motion (creation of heaven and earth, sun, moon, stars, seasons, sunrise, sunset, snow, heat, light, etc.); in forms of life (flowers, trees, vegetables, fish, birds, beasts—*man*).

a) *Reverence in man.*—The duty of reverence; simple prayers.

II. NATURE AS A SCHOOL—GOD AS TEACHER.

"In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

THE WISDOM OF GOD demands TRUST IN MAN.

B. *The wisdom of God.*

"God saw that it was good."

In the above creation: the careful and perfect designs (a) in the laws of nature; (b) in the laws of growth and of life; (c) in the human frame—eye, ear, hand, mind, and soul.

b) *Trust in man.*—The duty of trust; memory gems.

³ In the BIBLICAL WORLD for August, 1900; also for April and May, 1903.

III. NATURE AS A HOME—GOD AS FATHER.

"Thou givest them their food in due season."

THE LOVE OF GOD demands GRATITUDE IN MAN.

C. *The love of God.*

"God is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His creatures."

God's love and care in the above creation: (a) to animals—nest, lair, cave, forest, ocean; (b) to individuals—home, parents, teachers; boyhood stories of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, etc.; (c) families—Noah's family, Jacob's family in Egypt; (d) nations—Israel.

c) *Gratitude in man.*—The duty of gratitude; lessons in charity and self-denial.

IV. NATURE AS A REPUBLIC (KINGDOM)—GOD AS RULER.

"Where shall I flee from Thy presence?"

THE RULE AND PRESENCE OF GOD demand OBEDIENCE IN MAN.

D. *The rule and presence of God.*

"God ruleth the pride of the roaring sea."

God rules in power, wisdom and love; God rules everywhere by his acts; God was with Adam in the garden, Noah in the flood, Hagar in the desert, Jacob on the ladder, Moses on the mountain, Jonah on the ocean, Daniel in the den.

d) *Obedience in man.*—The duty of obedience; how to show it.

COURSE II. INCLUDING FOUR GRADES.

The chief interest in children for the next three or four years centers in great characters and great events. The historical sense is strongly developing. It is the craving age of biography for strong, heroic, courageous men. The events should be presented with dramatic power—that is, as full of action and motion. Children's minds hunger for moving pictures, full of humanity, justice, and defiance of danger. Teachers find it difficult to make the history of the Judges and of the Kings interesting to children. Let me suggest that a strong appeal to the growing sense of nationality and of patriotism will at once awaken a lively interest.

Carrying out the idea of Herbart, let me urge that history be presented as a chain where each child shall add his own links as his history-knowledge grows.⁴

The courses in Hebrew have not been elaborated. The curriculum of the late Dr. M. Mielziner in the *Year Book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* (1896, p. 36), and the booklet of Mr. Gerson B. Levi, of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, are very satisfactory; either one can be readily fitted into the above scheme.

⁴ DODD, *Introduction to Herbartian Principles*, pp. 50, 51, 71.

[Class I.—Intermediate or Historical; Age—eight to nine years; Branch—History and Religion.]

THEME—GOD IN JEWISH HISTORY.

I. IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

God reveals himself in man—in human history. God reveals himself in Jewish history.

INTRODUCTION.

- a) *In man and woman.*—Review previous theme and early stories; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel.
- b) *In events.*—Creation, flood, rainbow, destruction of Sodom; covenant with Abraham; saving of Lot; saving and elevation of Joseph; Israel in Egypt.
- c) *In laws and institutions.*—Sacrifices of sheep and fruit; altar; covenants with Noah and Abraham.

[Class II.—Intermediate; Age, nine to ten years; Branch—History, Hebrew, and Religion.]

II. IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

- a) *In men and women.*—Review the above, Part I. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, Miriam.
- b) *In events.*—Exodus, plagues, Red Sea; revelation at Sinai; building the tabernacle; death of Moses; conquest of Canaan.
- c) *In laws and institutions.*—The sabbath; holidays—Pasach, Shabuoth, Succoth, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; tabernacle and worship; sacrifices; Ten Commandments; laws of charity, justice, and health; priesthood.

[Class III.—Intermediate; Age—ten to eleven years; Branch—History, Hebrew, and Religion.]

III.

Review Intermediate I and II.

- a) *In men and women.*—Joshua, elders, judges, Saul, Samuel, David, Solomon; priests, poets, prophets.
- b) *In events.*—First king under Saul; first religious music under David; first prophets under Samuel; first temple under Solomon.
- c) *In laws and institutions.*—National language—Hebrew; national battlecry—"Sh'ma Yisroel;" national capital—Jerusalem; national flag—shield of David; national institutions—holidays, court, temple.

[Class IV.—Intermediate or Historical; Age—eleven to twelve years; Branch—History, Hebrew, and Religion.]

IV.

- a) *In men and women.*—Review Intermediate III; in northern Kingdom; in Southern Kingdom; priests and prophets; Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Ruth, Jonah, Daniel, Esther; scribes and interpreters of the law.

- b) *In events*.—Destruction of Northern Kingdom, 720 B. C.; destruction of Southern Kingdom, 586 B. C.; the exile—its religious effects; return and the Second Commonwealth; Israel's punishment—God's justice and love.
- c) *In laws and institutions*.—The glory of prophecy; the writing of the scroll; sacrifices losing their hold; institution of worship and instruction; the Bible and its divisions; new holidays—Purim and Chanukah.

COURSE III. THE BIBLE CLASS.

The mind of the thirteen-year-old child is unsettled. The age of faith is thinning to the end of its anchor thread. The age of doubt is just ready to throw out its cable. Between the two the lad holds on to both. His mind is a see-saw—a religious restlessness.

What better pabulum for the soul with its medium of faith than the soul-stirring psalms of penitence, petition, triumph, and adoration! What better stimulant for a mind wrestling with doubt than the hopeful, heart-inspiring optimism of the prophets!

I advocate for this year a radical departure. The child is ready to enter high school and is mentally prepared to carry on his own thinking. In the sabbath school he has finished the *history* of the Bible; he ought to be ready to understand its style and appreciate its poetry—its *spirit*. I wonder if the reason for the failure of adult Bible classes cannot be found in this postponement of Bible appreciation too late in life. The Bible should be studied before confirmation as a compulsory exercise; then it will be a delightful pastime after confirmation. The experiment worked admirably in my own school. Every other branch of study was discontinued for the year, and the entire stress laid on the analysis and sympathetic understanding of a few psalms. What was at first an uninteresting hour grew steadily into a recitation eagerly anticipated.

Our children should be more familiar with the Bible language and phraseology. Most of them seem out of harmony with the atmosphere of oriental symbolism and rhetoric. Give a child the oriental background of social, historical, and agricultural life, analyze the particular psalm or prophecy by a series of stimulating questions; let the child—not the teacher—answer these questions for himself on paper and, at the following recitation, let the teacher present his answers, give the unity of the psalm in question; and it will be found that the child has not only expressed himself, but has caught something of the spirit of Hebrew poetry. The psalm is by that time a part of the soul-life and sinks its way into memory-life. Far better one short psalm assimilated, than one hundred spiritually undigested.

Sections I and II of the Bible scheme are to serve as a general introduction and should consume only a few recitations.

I would suggest that those most competent to do this work analyze a few dozen psalms and prophecies in this manner, mapping out courses of instruction, two and three years ahead, giving the classes variety of studies and methods.⁵ I do verily believe that the adoption of this plan will soon make the study of a psalm, not a teasing of time nor a torment of the soul, but a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

[*Class—Bible; Age—thirteen years; Branch—Bible Study: History of psalmists and prophets.*]

THEME—GOD IN THE BIBLE.

I.

The revelation of God in the soul. The revelation of the soul in religion, art, science. The revelation of the Jew in literature—the Bible. Why not in plastic arts?

II. A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

Geography, especially physical geography of the Bible. National literature of the Bible. Literary forms of the Bible. Favorite figures of speech in the Bible. Customs and social life of Bible times. Modern attitude toward and practical value of the Bible.

III. STUDY OF AN INDIVIDUAL PSALM OR PROPHECY.

Analytic.—Literary form. Historical, spiritual, or physical background. Pick out figures of speech; explain.

Synthetic.—Read passage as a unit. Wherein is it a soul-revelation?

Memorize.

IV. ILLUSTRATION.

PSALM CXXXIII.

- a) *Theme—brotherly love.*—The beauty of harmony, in the home, school, and world. Did men always dwell together in unity? Why? Are there races and individuals who cannot dwell together?
- b) *Compared with oil.*—Describe the olive and the oriental method of production of oil. Uses of oil. Why poured on the head? What significance in the beard? Why the beard of Aaron rather than that of Moses? Why flowing to the hem? Meaning is that the consecrating power of harmony like the most precious oil hallows the entire man from head to foot.
With dew.—What is dew? Its value in Palestine. Where is Hermon? What relation does Hermon bear to Mount Zion? Meaning is that harmony is like the enriching dew that fertilizes the entire land from north to south.
- c) *Reward.*—Life is the greatest of God's gifts. Is life valuable without harmony?

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from thy mouth."

⁵ See the biblical interpretations in the BIBLICAL WORLD, April and May, 1903.

COURSE IV. THE CONFIRMATION CLASS.

The confirmation class represents the highest grade in the sabbath school, and its curriculum should be designed so that all the previous years' instruction may be gradual and necessary steps in the religious educational growth to the spiritual climax of the confirmant. Entrance into this class and graduation from it should be a privilege to be *earned* by study, yet one to be urged upon all as a religious obligation and a moral duty.

We present in the following pages a plan of instruction for this advanced grade, which in form and substance, though from a higher perspective, is intimately and organically related to all that has gone before it, and whose full comprehension presupposes an appreciable familiarity with the foregoing courses. The various hints, thoughts, and questions thrown out on the fivefold confirmation scheme would, when properly elaborated, form a consistent confirmation manual. Holding its framework intact, a teacher might vary its questions and answers every few years. In continuing the study of Hebrew, I should confine it largely to an intimate and first-hand knowledge of the Prayer-Book, while the history should be limited to an appreciation of the talmudical period, divided also, as the historical courses were, into (a) men and women; (b) events; (c) laws and institutions. The teacher must be especially guarded that the confirmant catch the full meaning of the relation between tradition and progress, ceremony and practice.

[*Class—Confirmation; Age—fourteen to sixteen years.*]

THEME—GOD IN PERSONAL LIFE.

I. GOD IN NATURE.

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth sheweth His handiwork."

The world about us. Creation by God. Evidences of his power, love, and rule. Arguments for God. The world as God's temple. Attributes of God.

II. GOD IN JEWISH HISTORY.

"Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

The world of human life. God's relation to man. Why is human life so beautiful? Man in the image of God. Implies what?

The soul of man viewing the power, wisdom, love, and rule of God in nature is religion. The effect reflecting back on the soul producing reverence, trust, gratitude, and obedience is morality.

Their action and interaction constitute ethical religion.

What is religion? How and through whom revealed? What is the Jewish religion? What is the progressive expression of its spirit? What is the relation between creed and deed? What are the Jewish holidays? The election, mission, and covenant of Israel for ethical monotheism? How manifested?

III. GOD IN THE BIBLE.

"This is the book of the generations of man."

The revelation of God at Sinai. What is inspiration? Has it ceased?
 The ever-progressive revelation of God. The Bible of the world.
 Especial revelation in our Bible.
 What is the Bible? Its main divisions? How written and composed?
 How is God revealed in the Bible?
 The Bible and its value in modern life.

IV. GOD IN PERSONAL LIFE.

"What doth the Lord ask of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God."

What is the value of the God-idea to the individual? The highest expression thereof in the prophets? What is the personal message?
 What are man's duties—to God, to himself, to his parents, to his fellow-men, to lower animals?
 What is virtue? What is conscience? What are its rewards and punishments? Jewish conception of immortality?
 The supremacy of character? The beauty of personal and individual salvation?

V. GOD IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

"MY house shall become a house of prayer for all nations," etc.

What is the highest expression of the religious spirit? Define. What is meant by the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man?
 What is the destiny of the human race? What part therein to be played by Judaism? What is the messianic ideal?

[Class—Adult or Post-Confirmation; Age—at least sixteen years.]

THEME—GOD IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

I. JEWISH HISTORY.

- a) *Literary development*.—(1) *The Bible and the temple*; (2) *the Talmud and the academy*; (3) *the Prayer-Book and the synagogue*; (4) *Middle age and modern philosophy and poetry*. Lives of leading rabbis; maxims; relation of Talmud to Bible and modern Judaism; gems of the Prayer-Book.
- b) *Historical development*.—Age of patriarchs to destruction of temple 70 A. C.; 70 A. C. to 900 A. C.; 900 A. C. to present day.
- c) *Religious development*.—From a simple stone to altar, tabernacle, temple, synagogue; sacrifices—their day and decay; progress of worship; progress of Jewish consciousness; tradition and progressive Judaism.

II. UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

Reason and faith—God revealed by both.
 God in the story of human progress, leading the race through war, struggle, slavery, and sin to freedom, triumph, and progress.
 The destiny of man.
 Necessity of religion.
 Man's future in the light of science and religion.
 History under God's care.